

reproduced with astonishing naiveté, even while he denounced the practical measures proposed to give effect to them*. Like some elements in the Catholic reaction of the twentieth century, the Protestant reaction of the sixteenth sighed for a vanished age of peasant prosperity. The social theory of Luther, who hated commerce and capitalism, has its nearest modern analogy in the Distributive State of Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton. For the arts by which men amass wealth and power, as for the anxious provision which accumulates for the future, Luther had all the distrust of a peasant and a monk. Christians should earn their living in the sweat of their brow, take no thought for the morrow, marry young and trust Heaven to provide for its own. Like Melanchthon, Luther thought that the most admirable life was that of the peasant, for it was least touched by the corroding spirit of commercial calculation, and he quoted Virgil to drive home the lesson to be derived from the example of the patriarchs,⁸⁸

The labour of the craftsman is honourable, for he serves the community in his calling; the honest smith or shoemaker is a priest*. Trade is permissible, provided that it is confined to the exchange of necessities, and that the seller demands no more than will compensate him for his labour and risk. The unforgivable

sins are idleness' and covetousness, for
 they destroy
 the unity of the fey[^]oFwhicli Christians are
 members.
 The grand author and maintainer of both
 is Rome.
 For, having ruined Italy, the successor of St.
 Peter, who
 lives in a worldly pomp that no king or
 emperor can
 equal, has fastened his fangs on Germany ;
 while the
 mendicant,, orders, mischievous alike in.
 their practice
 and by'their example, cover the land with
 a[^] horde of
 beggars. Pilgrimages, saints' days
 and n[^]fnasteries
 are an excuse for idleness and must be
 suppressed.
 Vagrants must be "lS!lra[^]an[^][^]
 compelled
 to
 labour, and each town must organize
 charity for the
 support of the honest poor.⁸⁷